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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

June 22, 2006

Mr. James Colter
U.S. Department of the Navy
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
Northern Division
10 Industrial Highway
Code 1823, Mail Stop 82
Lester, PA 19113-2090

Re: Responses to EPA Comments on the Draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan for the NUSC Disposal Area

Dear Mr. Colter:

EPA reviewed the responses dated June 5, 2006 to our comments dated February 27, 2006 on the *Work Plan for Remedial Investigation, Site 08 – NUSC Disposal Area* for Naval Station Newport, Middletown, Rhode Island dated January 2006 in light of their technical adequacy, consistency, adherence to guidance, and agreements reached during the December 2005 conference call. Detailed comments are provided in Attachment A.

A better summary of the levels of contamination detected is warranted. Pages 2-5 and 2-6 of the work plan do not discuss the ranges of concentrations of the contaminants detected at the various locations. The qualitative discussion alone is not sufficient to describe the nature of the contamination present at the Site. While it is not necessary to reproduce all the data tables from the Study Area Screening Evaluation (SASE), a better quantitative discussion of what is currently known regarding contaminant areas should be included in the work plan.

EPA will review the IDW information referenced in the response and will provide comments, if any, to the Navy following the review. EPA expects to receive the information in a timely manner so any required changes can be incorporated into the documents before the work is conducted.

Since the focus of the additional sampling requested by EPA is to characterize the backfill, please clarify that the reference to sampling around the perimeter of the disposal areas actually refers to inside the perimeter and within the backfill in these disposal areas.

The Navy indicated that additional sampling was planned in the can disposal area in response to EPA comment #3. However, EPA's comment specifically addressed sampling the backfilled material (that had been placed back into the excavation without being analyzed). Therefore, it is presumed the additional sampling proposed by the Navy in response to EPA's comment #3

addresses only sampling of the backfill. It is not clear whether additional sampling has been added in response to a RIDEM request for an additional sampling location in the vicinity of MW-02B. If confirmation sampling has not been completed at the limits of the excavations in the can and drum disposal areas (excavation of which has reportedly now been completed), then additional sampling is also required beneath the backfill to confirm that all contamination exceeding the cleanup goals has been removed. It appears that such confirmation sampling was envisioned by this work plan (refer to the last sentence in Section 2.2), but it has not been carried through and incorporated into the sampling requirements for the remedial investigation. Please edit the work plan to include these confirmation samples in addition to those required in response to EPA comment #3.

As we have discussed at the May and June RPM meetings, the work plan should include a proposed schedule based on an assumed work plan approval date.

I look forward to working with you and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management toward the cleanup of the NUSC Disposal Area and completion of the RI Work Plan this fiscal year. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 918-1385 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kymberlee Keckler, Remedial Project Manager
Federal Facilities Superfund Section

Attachment

cc: Paul Kulpa, RIDEM, Providence, RI
Cornelia Mueller, NETC, Newport, RI
Chau Vu, USEPA, Boston, MA
Jennifer Stump, Gannet Fleming, Harrisburg, PA
Steven Parker, Tetra Tech-NUS, Wilmington, MA

ATTACHMENT A

Response #	Comment
5	Some work will be required (presumably in the spring) to assess the existence of the overburden aquifer during high groundwater conditions. This must be done irrespective of when the rest of the remedial investigation work is completed.
30	The proposed text suggests screening site concentrations against background concentrations. As you know, there are differences between the Navy's and EPA's background policies. As discussed at other operable units at Newport, EPA does not recommend using background concentrations to eliminate COPCs. The contribution of risk from background must be acknowledged. One option is to calculate background risk separately and compare those risks to site-related risks. This has been done at several other Superfund sites, including Centredale Manor in North Providence, RI and the Nyanza Chemical Waste Dump in Sudbury, MA.
31	The response should refer to the response for Comment #30.
39	The response should refer to the response for Comment #26.
45	The Ebert study on consumption of freshwater fish among Maine anglers recommends various consumption rates for different percentiles (50th, 66th, 75th, 90th, 95th, and arithmetic mean), different water flow characterization (all waters, rivers and streams), and different sharing habits. The rates that the Navy proposes in the response (13g/day for RME and 5g/day for CTE) are the values for 75th and 50th percentiles for all waters without sharing. EPA recommends further evaluation of water flow characterization at the site (flowing, standing, all waters) and selecting the rates associated with that characterization at 90th percentile for RME and arithmetic mean for CTE, using no sharing rates. Revise the rates for children to be one third of the revised adult rates.
46	Although it is acceptable to evaluate a combined adult/child residential receptor and not evaluate a child receptor separately for cancer risks because of the exposure duration, a separate non-cancer hazard evaluation for child receptor is necessary because children have higher non-cancer hazards than adults.